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NSC BRIEFING

8 March 1955

JAPAN - SOVIET PEACE TREATY TALKS

I. Japan awaits final word from USSR on start of peace treaty negotiations. The Japanese hope talks will begin soon after 1 April, in New York.

A. Following exchange of notes in late Jan between unofficial Soviet mission in Japan and Prime Minister Hatoyama, the USSR first rejected New York as a site, but later agreed to any location desired by Japanese.

B. Latest exchange was on 23 Feb, when Japanese reaffirmed choice of New York. Soviet answer still awaited.

II. Soviet "normalization" approach to Japan facilitated by election campaigning, during which Hatoyama promoted theme of Japan-Orbit friendship.

A. First feeler came from Radio Moscow (14 Dec 54): reversed previous Soviet position by asserting Japan need not sever relations with US in order to "normalize" relations with Peiping.

B. On 16 Dec 54, Molotov stated USSR took "positive" attitude toward Japan's desire establish normal relations.

C. On 25 Jan, head of unofficial Soviet mission in Tokyo presented unsigned, undated note directly to Hatoyama (short-circuiting foreign ministry),

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for negotiations.

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- D. Foreign Ministry had previously refused to accept note, on grounds action would give Soviet mission de facto recognition.

III. A Japanese official has told FEC that Japan will start bargaining with following demands:

- A. Return of southern half of Kurile island chain, also Shikotan, Habomai islands.
- B. Permission to fish in waters off Kamchatka up to Soviet 12-mile limit (30-mile limit now observed by Japanese).
- C. Soviet support for Japan's membership in the UN. (Soviets probably holding this as quid pro quo for Peiping's admittance)
- D. Completion of return Japanese POW's (USSR claim only 1200 remain; figure at 10,000-12,000).

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IV. Foreign Ministry recognizes that Japan's bargaining position virtually nil.

- A. Responsible ministry officials acknowledge Hatoyama's eagerness for diplomatic triumph has undermined their position.
- B. Tani, who runs Foreign Office for Shigemitsu, characterizes Hatoyama's statements re Orbit as "idiotic" and a demonstration of his "complete ignorance of international affairs." (Hatoyama's career has been purely political--member of Diet

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- V. Foreign Ministry officials think it extremely doubtful Soviets will return any territories, and they expect difficulties over the number of repatriates.
- A. They are hopeful Soviets will agree to return the prisoners, give fishing concessions.
 - B. They intend to resist expected Soviet proposal which would first end state of war and establish diplomatic relations, leaving territorial problems to be settled later.
 - C. However, Hatoyama favors such a step, might well overrule his professional diplomats during negotiations.
- VI. Japan not likely to accept any Soviet proposals which would alter its basic relationships with the US if foreign office retains control of negotiations.
- A. However, if Japan insists on discussions re territories, Soviets will almost certainly bring up the question of American bases in Japan and Okinawa.
- VII. Japanese public opinion tends to equate Kuriles with Okinawa.
- A. USSR, however, considers the Kuriles lawfully Soviet as result Yalta. No likelihood USSR would return any part of Kuriles.
 - B. Moscow might suggest that discussions on Kuriles await time when Okinawa and Bonins returned to Japan. Such a stand could stimulate irredentist sentiment in Japan.

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C. Soviet return of Habomai and Shikotan to Japan likewise not considered probable in view of consistent Soviet record of holding on to any territory falling under their control. Leftists in Japan could exploit this if it happened. Govt might also use it as lever against continued US holding of Okinawa and Bonins.

D. ☐ position, publicly supported by US, is that Habomais illegally occupied by Soviets.

VIII No indication yet that Soviets will attempt to include all Orbit in negotiations.



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